

Submerged Aquatic Vegetation (SAV)

Todd Beser wants to save the Chesapeake Bay with submerged aquatic vegetation....

Todd Beser/ Environmental Scientist / USAEC:

“What SAV does is it provides food and habitat for Bay organisms...

Basically SAV is underwater grasses, but it's a crucial part of the bay's ecosystem

Todd Beser/ Environmental Scientist / USAEC:

...It stabilizes sediments and helps keep the water clear... ...In the freshwater systems, there is about 14 different species found up here.

Today we're going to use 4 different species for restoration.”

Beser's team on the Aberdeen Proving Ground begins by harvesting the submerged-aquatic grasses and from there transplant them to the Bay with the use of a “turf grid” system.

Todd Beser/ Environmental Scientist / USAEC:

“We're harvesting the plants from grow-out tanks instead of taking it from existing beds in the Bay, which doesn't harm existing beds, and it actually just adds to the population of SAV out in the Bay. The turf grids we're using alleviate the problem of having people in the water and disturbing the bottom sediments.”

That's because some locations around Aberdeen Proving Ground have submerged dangers due to years of military training and testing.

Geoffrey Jay/ Asst. Research Scientist/ Weston Solutions, Inc.: “The advantages to using these grids are, you can use fewer personnel and you get into more dangerous locations... ...For the areas on APG we have small areas we can actually access, so it’s just easier to use this grid system. We can easily start in the spring and set a couple out and some locations use them, let those plants get established, remove the grids and move them to another location and use the same grids over and over ...

The innovative turf grid system originally conceived in New Hampshire’s coastal waters by research coordinator Julie Bortz, at the Chesapeake Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve in Maryland, helps make this restoration project a quick and cost effective way for the U.S. Army to sustain the Chesapeake Bay. And in the years to come soldiers, their families and the bays wildlife can enjoy these safe and healthy waters. Jesse McGill, Aberdeen Proving Ground, MD.